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Teams needed for Puerto Rico rebuilding

SAN JUAN (BP) — Southern Baptist disaster relief feeding units began pulling out of hurricane-raged Puerto Rico Oct. 21 as efforts shift to securing volunteer teams for rebuilding and repairing damaged churches and homes.

The withdrawal, however, is far from an indicator that conditions are back to normal.

One month after Hurricane Georges blasted through the island on its deadly path across the Caribbean, about a fourth of the population is still without power — many with no relief in sight for several months.

Nine thousand refugees remain in shelters.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency reports more than 250,000 residents have applied for federal disaster assistance due to Georges in Puerto Rico.

This exceeds the previous record of 185,600 applications taken in Florida following Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

Southern Baptist feeding operations, which from the start have been supplemental to local efforts, are being phased out as power is restored and feeding responsibilities are reassigned to National Guard-

staffed kitchens, according to Fred Kinsey, on-site coordinator for the Puerto Rico operation and volunteer disaster relief coordinator for Southern Baptists in Michigan.

Five feeding units — involving volunteers from Texas, Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama, and a joint team from Indiana, Missouri, and Michigan — prepared more than 88,000 meals through Oct. 20.

About 15 of the approximately 70 Southern Baptist churches in Puerto Rico suffered extensive damage.

Calvary Church in San Juan, for instance, lost the roof from the second floor of their building — the living quarters for pastor Gilberto Rufat and his family.

Many of their possessions were ruined, and the structure will be torn down and rebuilt completely.

"I have moved to a house that is in front of my father, and the church is paying the rent," Rufat said, adding that federal disaster assistance is expected to help with the loss.

In another example, Grace Church in Yauco near the island's southern coast also was destroyed.

Pastor Carlos Pacheco said the church already had been planning to relocate to larger quarters adjacent to the building, which was located at the

sionary who serves as disaster relief director and volunteer coordinator for Southern Baptists in Puerto Rico.

Individuals and groups

front of his father's property.

Both structures were built of wood, typical of buildings that suffered damage.

Official building codes in Puerto Rico usually call for all-concrete construction because of the constant threat of hurricane winds and flooding.

Many buildings — and most of those damaged — are either completely wood-frame construction or have wood-frame roofs.

No major injuries were reported among church members anywhere on the island, according to Rafael Rodriguez, a Southern Baptist North American Mission Board mis-

interested in participating in long-term rebuilding efforts in Puerto Rico should contact Mickey Caison, disaster relief coordinator for the North American Mission Board, at (770) 410-6442.

Looking back

10 years ago

Laurel native Faye Pearson becomes the first woman ever appointed to an overseas administrative post at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Pearson, a 20-year missionary veteran, was appointed associate to the board's director for East Asia.

20 years ago

Bethel Church, Copiah Association, celebrates dedication services and holds open house for its new \$50,000 pastorum. Pastor Ricky Kennedy moved into the home September 24. The church held a stewardship promotion toward the project, and the home was completed debt-free.

50 years ago

Calvary Church, Greenwood, presents pastor R.A. Tullos with a late model Plymouth De Luxe automobile as a gesture of the love and affection felt for him and his family, and their work in the church. Allen Wood Motors gave the church a special price and threw in a set of seat covers.

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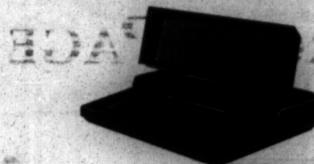
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It's still just a paint job

Before you had a car, before you had a house, before you had the confidence to march boldly into the future, you had a job. And now, so do 50,000 more Mississippians, thanks to an economic partnership that's working. It's given hope to more people than any government program in the history of our state. Why? Because it's not just government. It's gaming.

Perhaps you didn't know that government and gambling are equally responsible for your way of life — that is, until the Mississippi Gaming Association began prying open your eyes with television commercials containing the script cited above.

The Norman Rockwell-like visual images that accompany the script are just as compelling. The smiling young couple inspecting a vacant house with anticipation written all over their faces. Children gleefully frolicking through leaves in the front yard.

Warm, fuzzy images of fulfilled people who wouldn't be so fulfilled if gambling had not taken its rightful place alongside state government. That's right, alongside state government. Our partner. Government and gambling by the people, for the people.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness — through an "economic partnership" with gamblers equal to the government.

Ah, those Founding Fathers. If only they had been as enlightened as we.

If only they had been as interested in counting the money as they were fighting the King, they would have at least been rich as well as subjugated.

If only they had known about the 200-item casino buffet, they probably wouldn't have starved during the Winter of Despair at Valley Forge.

If only someone had told them of the "economic partnership" gambling provides.

Perhaps you're wondering why the gambling-industrial complex in Mississippi has all of a sudden become so decidedly avuncular.

Look no farther than the initiative effort designed to give Mississippi voters — all Mississippi voters, not just voters in eligible counties — the opportunity they have never had to decide whether they want gambling in the state.

"The industry is spooked by the initiative effort. There is no other way to describe it," wrote Associated Press analyst Jack Elliott Jr. in a recent commentary distributed to Mississippi newspapers.

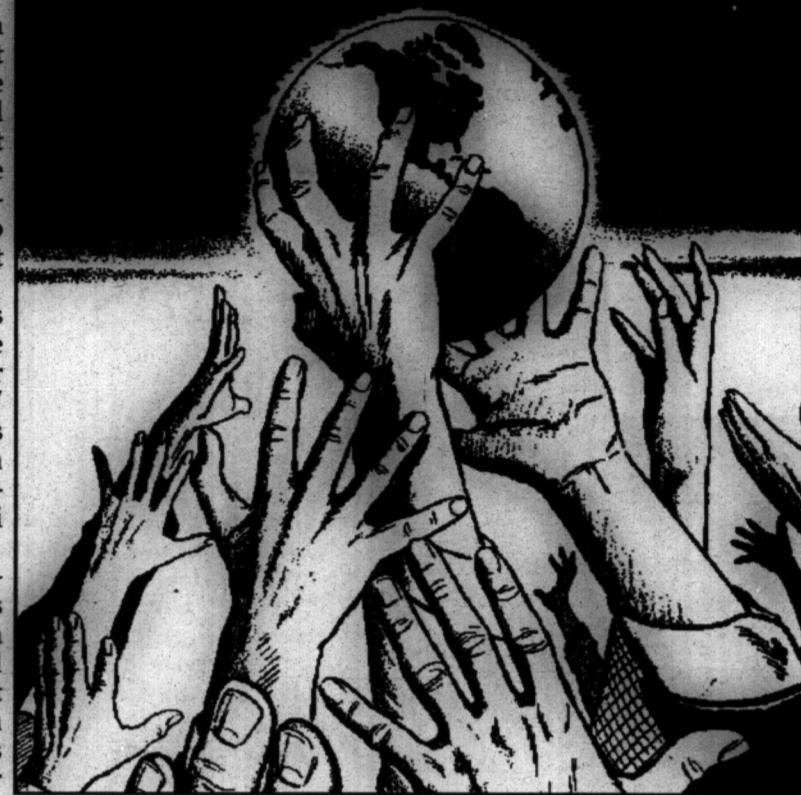
"So much of the industry's top management is unfamiliar with Mississippi's political and social climates. The first response to the initiative, in some gaming quarters, was to strike back. But cooler minds prevailed and the public relations scheme now airing is to paint the industry as good for the state, not solely for itself," Elliott pointed out.

At bottom, though, it's still just a paint job.

Could the young couple in the television commercial afford the huge house they are touring, given the average casino pay scale for the common jobs available to ordinary Mississippians? Probably not.

Don't forget — most upper-level (read: high-paying) jobs go to people imported from Nevada, Atlantic City, and other established gambling centers. This is borne out by Elliott's observation that so many top management types are "unfamiliar with Mississippi's political and social climates."

FOR WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN, IF HE SHALL GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL? OR WHAT SHALL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL?"
— MARK 8:36-37



Does the industry contribute 50,000 jobs to the state? "Doubtful," said Paul G. Jones II, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission.

Even if that figure is accurate, Jones goes on to point out, a disappointing number of those jobs are average-to-low paying, and many other jobs counted in the total are part-time with no benefits.

Think on these facts when you next encounter this multi-million-dollar feel good television campaign, and you'll probably come to the same conclusion as a growing number of Mississippians.

Namely, that it's going to take a lot more than cheap paint to cover up gambling's negative impact on our way of life.

upcoming elections, do not overlook one of the most important qualifications: morality.

History has proven that a leader's public policies most often flow from his private beliefs and behavior. In fact, Jesus himself set forth this principle in the books of Matthew and Luke when he declared that not only is a tree known by its fruit but that bad roots simply cannot produce good fruit.

For this reason, founding father John Witherspoon declared, "The people in general ought to have regard to the moral character of those whom they invest with authority either in the legislative, executive or judicial branches."

Very simply, morality matters not only in the family and the church, but it also matters very much in civil government.

Therefore, as you vote in the upcoming elections, be sure to heavily weigh a candidate's morality.

White, who represents District 29 in the Mississippi State Senate, is a trustee of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

GUEST OPINION:

Christians and the political process

By Richard White, member
Wynndale Church, Terry

Many are unconvinced that their vote changes things.

The result is elections without full participation, campaigns without substance, and winners without clear mandates.

I report these concerns not to cast blame, but to encourage Christians. John Jay, the first chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, said, "Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers and it is the duty as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers."

I gratefully acknowledge the sacrifice, hard work, and commitment of those who serve our nation and communities. I deplore increasing public cyni-

cism, which too often dismisses the role of government and ridicules public officials in sometimes understandable but often misguided frustration.

We need more, not less, Christian participation — not only in electoral politics but also in broader issues such as advocacy legislation, family issues, Christian action, etc.

As we prepare for the Nov. 3 elections, let us each examine our political behavior and take steps to build public confidence and participation in the political process by voting.

More importantly, we need to examine our responsibilities as Christians (Rom. 13).

As you ponder the qualifications of candidates in the

Annuity Board seeks help finding retirees in need

DALLAS (BP)—The Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is asking laypersons, active pastors, and association directors of missions to help locate retired ministers or their widows in financial need.

Anyone with knowledge of a possible eligible person should write Ileen Bray, manager of supplemental assistance, Annuity Board, SBC, P.O. Box 2190, Dallas, TX 75221; or call (800) 262-0511. The e-mail address is ibray@absbc.org.

Expense relief grants may be paid toward specified expenses including utilities, telephone service, prescription drugs and medical bills, eyeglasses and dental expenses, hearing aids,

medical or burial insurance, minor household or auto repairs, and funeral expenses.

Expense grants usually are paid directly to the provider, but may be paid as reimbursement to the recipient for approved expenditures.

Trustees of the Annuity Board establish relief guidelines, and they review applications three times each year.

General guidelines include at least 10 years salaried ministry in SBC churches or mission work and a maximum monthly income of \$900 for singles and \$1,200 for married couples.

Total savings, securities or income-producing assets may not exceed \$20,000, excluding a

home or other non-income producing property as well as cash value life insurance.

More than half the 700 people receiving supplemental assistance from the board receive no regular annuity benefit because their churches never enrolled in the Church Annuity Plan.

Others reached retirement age with small accumulations in their accounts because of small salaries, small contributions, and short-term participation.

Another source of financial aid to retired preachers is the board's Adopt An Annuitant program that will spend over \$2 million this year in \$75 per month additions to low benefits of nearly 3,000 retirees.

The Adopt An Annuitant program is supported by direct gifts from concerned individuals and organizations.

For more information, contact Robin Nichols in the MBCB Church-Minister Relations Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

Record

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Ex. Comm., full board meet in Jackson

By Tim Nicholas
MBCB Communications Director

The executive committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), meeting in Jackson on Oct. 20, honored retired MBCB executive director-treasurer Bill Causey by granting him emeritus status; approved transfers of two board staff members; and noted the upcoming retirement of another staffer.

In honoring Causey, who served as executive director-treasurer from 1989-98, the executive committee also announced intentions to name after Causey a yet-to-be-built multipurpose building at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko.

A third honor bestowed on Causey by the executive committee was to designate in his name \$40,000 of a previously-announced \$50,000 gift to the Hong Kong Baptist University.

The money will be used to help build a dormitory room in a planned dormitory building, and to decorate two rooms in the existing guest house.

Causey's name will be placed on the doors to the three rooms.

The remaining \$10,000 will go toward an endowment to be used strictly for mission endeavors in China.

Hong Kong Baptist University plans to pair American Baptist students as roommates with students from China in efforts to provide a gospel witness.

The executive committee approved the Dec. 1 transfer of Wes Pegues, a five-year MBCB consultant in the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department, to the new position of ministry computer consultant in the MBCB ministry office.

The position is

designed as a resource for churches, associations, and MBCB staff in utilizing computer information systems in ministry-related areas.

Duties will include preparation of demographic materials for churches and associations; coordination of Internet communications including the MBCB Web site; and aid in preparation of the Annual Church Profile.

Pegues is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and earned a master of religious education degree from Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth.

On Jan. 1, Paul Harrell will conclude 21 years as director of the MBCB Brotherhood Department to become part-time MBCB partnership ministries coordinator.

Harrell replaces Bill Hardy, who is retiring at the end of 1998. Hardy said he plans to stay involved in missions, do some writing concerning family interests, and will spend more time with his wife and grandchildren.

"Partnership has been an enriching and rewarding experience for me," said Hardy. He said that Mississippi Baptists' mission vision has allowed Christians to meet challenges inside and outside the partnerships, which ordinarily run for three years.

Harrell said he was looking forward to narrowing his focus of ministry to the mission strategy of the partnerships, which next year will be with the country of Ukraine, the Maryland/Delaware Baptist Convention, and a continuing medical/dental program with Baptists in Honduras.

"My major interest has been in helping lay people to realize that once they become Christians, they become ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ and God has gifted them and called them into full-time Christian servanthood," Harrell said.

The full convention board, meeting in Jackson on Oct. 26, approved a loan agreement with Trustmark National Bank for renovations and expansion at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian, and at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko.

The loan agreement includes borrowing up to three million dollars the first year and up to two million dollars more in the second year for the construction loan. Collateral of the same amount will be placed in a certificate of deposit (CD). That money comes from the Board's 90-day cash reserve.

The construction loan will cost one percent over the CD rate. The permanent loan, which kicks in when the renovations are

completed, will be for up to the five million dollar amount, with collateral and interest rates the same as the construction loan.

This plan saves \$1.4 million in interest rates over a standard loan. Debt service for the loan is provided through the capital needs item of the Mississippi Cooperative Program budget.

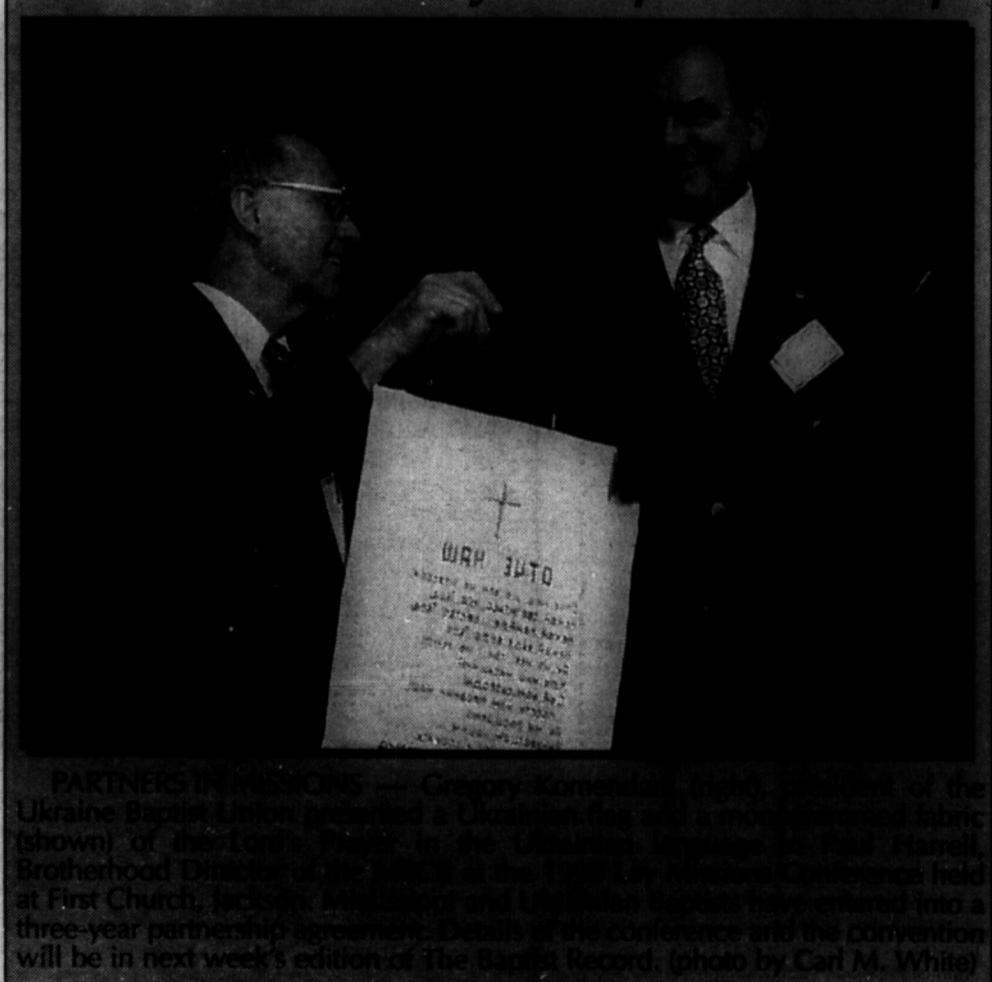
The board also accepted KPMG Peat Marwick as auditors for 1998, and approved recommendations from the new church expansion and the pastoral/church building aid committees.

The company has been MBCB auditor since 1961.

The MBCB new church expansion committee requested and received from the board \$10,000 toward the purchase of 6.96 acres of land for Caledonia Church, Caledonia, in Golden Triangle Association.

The pastoral/church building aid committee also received board approval of 12 requests for pastoral aid at \$64,500, and two requests for church building aid at \$11,000.

Miss., Ukraine form partnership



PARTNERS
Ukraine Baptists (not shown) of
Brotherhood Dept.
at First Church
three-year partnership agreement
will be in next week's edition of The Baptist Record. (photo by Carl M. White)

Miss. pastors evaluate status of preaching

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

Part two of a series

The Baptist Record asked four ministers in the state to respond to a series of questions about preaching. This week, three pastors give answers to questions about the state of preaching in Mississippi.

They are Rickey Blythe, pastor of First Church, Flora. Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, and Dean Register, pastor of Temple Church, Hattiesburg.

Next week, all four pastors discuss the resources they find valuable and helpful in preaching today.

BR: How do you evaluate the status of preaching in today's Mississippi Baptist churches?

BLYTHE: I think Mississippi Baptists are fortunate to have some of the finest preachers and evangelists to be found in the Southern Baptist Convention. I know preachers from points north to south

and east to west in our state. Our churches are occupied by men who love the Lord, love to preach, and have a great desire to see individuals saved and the church grow.

FUTRAL: Overall, I personally have been blessed and encouraged by the preaching I have heard throughout the Convention. I think it is important for us to recognize the various dimensions of spiritual giftedness, and in that light, understand that everyone does not preach the same way, nor should they. Of course, I have not heard everyone in the state preach, and only on occasion get to hear others fill the pulpit, but from the standpoint of preparation, content, and genuineness of heart in presenting the message of Christ, I think that our preachers do a great job.

REGISTER: Overall, I think the quality of preaching in Mississippi Baptist churches is better than ever. More pastors are taking advantage of educational opportunities. There is a hunger to proclaim the Gospel. Every pastor I know

genuinely wants to communicate God's Word to God's people.

BR: What is the weakest point in today's preaching?

FUTRAL: I tend to think that the weakest part in modern preaching has to do with communicating doctrine. I am not so sure that it is the fault of the preachers, but may have a lot to do with the world in which we live, a world that desires life's deepest issues to be communicated in 15 to 30 second sound bites. Just the mention of doctrinal preaching is in the minds of many people a synonym for extreme boredom. Dealing with the truth of the Word of God, in-depth, requires spending time laying a foundation, building a structure of understanding, and adding a roof of significance in daily life. Sometimes it cannot be done, in meaningful fashion, in 20 or 25 minutes.

REGISTER: The weakest point is probably discipline. For preaching to be effective a pastor must discipline himself to study the Bible systematically. Equally important he must strive to understand the people who will hear his message. In addition to discipline, I think balance is a weak point. Too often a pastor will feed his congregation a steady diet of one subject. Pastors have been called to share the whole counsel of God and not merely feed from the table of favorite selections.

BLYTHE: I find the application of the ancient text to modern life the weakest point. I watch Frank Pollard almost every Sunday morning and he does a masterful job of taking his congregation from the first century to the 20th century and back again. Most preaching I hear is heavy on Bible facts and light on application. The preacher who is able to take biblical facts and apply them to the 20th century world will for the most part have a satisfied congregation.

BR: What is the strongest point of today's preaching?

REGISTER: The strongest point may be our passion. Mississippi Baptist pastors have plenty of desire to preach. We want to win our state to Jesus even if we occasionally open our mouth before engaging our brain.

BLYTHE: I think the strongest point is the explanation of the biblical text. Two things have aided in this area. The advent of seminary extension programs and the availability of surplus commentaries.

FUTRAL: It seems to me, from what I hear from others, that there is a good and positive emphasis on what might be described as "relational" preaching. It is Biblical preaching and it relates people to real life, to each other, and to a living experience with the Lord. It is practical for Monday morning needs, as well as Sunday morning holiness.

IMB to double '99 summer missionaries

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptist missionaries need more than twice as many college students to fill overseas summer missions assignments in 1999 than they had in 1998.

Although more than 700 students participated in overseas summer missions assignments in 1998, almost 500 requests went unfilled that year, said Mike Lopez, who directs student missions recruitment for the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

Now, overseas missionaries have requested more than 1,500 college students for 1999.

To apply for summer, semester and short-term assignments, check out the student mobilization Internet site at <http://www.imb.org/students/> or call 1-800-789-GoYe (4693).

The application deadline for summer assignments is March 10, 1999. Applications for other assignments are accepted year-round.

Hemphill: BF&M reaction due to poor preaching

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — The public reaction to the family amendment of the Baptist Faith and Message (BF&M) and, now, Southwestern Seminary's requirement for faculty to sign the amended statement is probably an indication of a lack of strong biblical preaching in the United States, said Kenneth S. Hemphill, president of the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary.

"[The amendment] has not only taken the secular community by surprise but even some of the religious community, and that's disappointing that we haven't done a better job of teaching the Bible in such a way to help people understand the role of the husband as the servant leader," Hemphill said.

Southwestern's trustees updated the faculty requirement during their Oct. 19-20 meeting, prompting a front-page story in the Oct. 21 Fort Worth Star Telegram. The story has generated numerous media requests for interviews and comments from newspapers and television and radio stations in Texas.

In the story, it was reported that Dan G. Kent, a 19-year Old Testament professor, said he would not sign the amended statement and had submitted his retirement, declining to give the reasons for his retirement. He told the newspaper, "I don't think something that significant [as retiring] is ever based on one issue."

Hemphill said the media attention "is as surprising now as it was in Utah [because] it's a basic family statement that uses several Scripture passages and is based primarily on Ephesians 5," Hemphill said. The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) passed the family amendment to the

Baptist Faith and Message during its annual meeting held last June in Salt Lake City.

Hemphill said most faculty members have been very receptive to signing the amended statement but that two or three might not sign and may need to resign because the faculty policy manual indicates they should do so if at any point by their own conscience they feel they cannot teach according to and not contrary to the BF&M.

"Our charter is very clear on the fact that the convention operates the seminary and sets its teaching parameters. Our teaching parameters are the Baptist Faith and Message as established by the convention," Hemphill said.

The adoption of the family amendment at the SBC annual meeting in June necessitated a change in Southwestern's bylaws, which referred to the BF&M adopted in 1963 as the seminary's statement of faith. Reference to the year was deleted and the phrase "as may be amended from time to time by the Convention" was inserted in its place, with similar changes made in other places for consistency.

The new SBC article describes marriage as "the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime." It also

notes, "The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. ... A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. ... A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ."

Albania Baptists plan to form union of churches

KIEV, Ukraine (ABP) — Baptist work in Albania has grown to the point that several churches are planning to form a Baptist union in the country, according to a report at a European Baptist Federation (EBF) council meeting, Sept. 23-26 in Kiev, Ukraine.

A delegation from Albania attended the meeting, including Alfred "Freddy" Goloshi, co-pastor of Freedom Baptist Church in Tirana; Jonathan Steeper, director of the Baptist Centre in Tirana; Saverio Guarna, pastor of Way of Hope Baptist Church in Tirana, and Adnan Pula, elder of the Way of Hope Church.

In September 1998, representatives from the four congregations met to discuss the formation of a Baptist union. They formulated an initial covenant that has been taken back to the churches for ratification.

The church representatives plan to meet later in October to pursue forming a union, according to the Baptist Centre's Steeper.

The EBF council voted to accept the union as a provisional member with the understanding that the union's status be reviewed in three years.

If its formation has been completed and is functioning, its EBF membership will be confirmed in the year 2001.

NOBTS adding Mississippians to faculty

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — Six new professors and two new degree programs topped the list of recommendations approved by New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) trustees during their Oct. 12-14 annual fall session on the seminary campus.

New professors for the seminary's College of Undergraduate Studies are Eddie Campbell of Clarksdale, instructor in English; Tina Murdock of Pine Bluff, Ark., instructor in English and music; and John F. Gibson Jr. of Macon, Ga., assistant professor of communication.

Also joining the faculty Aug. 1 were medical and gerontological social work specialist Loretta Rivers of Union, instructor in social work; veteran education minister Charles Harvey Jr. of Shreveport, La., assistant professor of Christian education and associate director of the seminary's new professional doctoral degree programs; U.S. Naval Reserve chaplain Endel Lee of Mobile, Ala., instructor in preaching and pastoral work; and theology of American cults specialist Robert Stewart of Williamsburg, Ky., instructor in philosophy and systematic theology.

New professors for the seminary's graduate studies programs are Patricia Collier of Salinas, Calif., instructor in voice; R. Stanton Norman of Durant, Okla., assistant professor of theology, also elected to the McFarland Chair of Theology; and Timothy Searcy of Winchester, Ky., associate pro-

fessor of Christian education. Seminary administrators also informed trustees of the appointment of Philip Pinckard of Chattanooga, Tenn., as visiting associate professor of ethics, serving a one-year appointment during the sabbatical of Joe Trull, professor of ethics.

Campbell has been on the adjunct faculty of New Orleans Seminary's College of Undergraduate Studies since 1992 teaching English.

He has served in several Louisiana and Mississippi churches as a supply preacher and as minister of youth and music since 1987.

He completed both the bachelor and master of education degrees in English at Delta State University, Cleveland, in 1975 and 1976; and the master of divinity degree at New Orleans Seminary in 1994.

He is a current student in the doctor of philosophy degree program at NOBTS.

Gibson has been director of alumni affairs and church-minister relations at New Orleans Seminary since 1996.

He previously was pastor of First Church, Greenwood, 1992-95; director of college relations at New Orleans Seminary, 1983-91; pastor of White Sand Church, White Sand, La., 1988-

91; youth director at Southside Church, Baton Rouge, La., 1982-83; and youth director, First Church, Greenwood, 1979-82.

Gibson is from a family of preachers, including his father and grandfathers, both of whom were chaplains in World War II.

Gibson completed the bachelor of arts degree in history at Mississippi College, Clinton, in 1982; and both master of divinity and doctor of theology degrees at New Orleans Seminary in 1985 and 1993.

In other business, trustees

• approved a new doctor of educational ministry degree program, to be offered in August 1999, pending final approval from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), which recently created the degree program. New Orleans Seminary will be one of the first ATS-accredited institutions to offer this degree, which has never been available at any of the SBC seminaries.

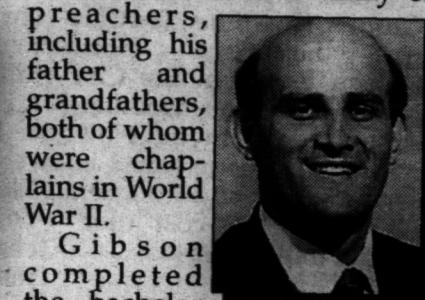
• approved a new bachelor of arts in church music degree program, effective immediately, in the seminary's College of Undergraduate Studies. The college previously offered a bachelor of arts degree with a major in music. The 126-hour degree program already has received approval from the

National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

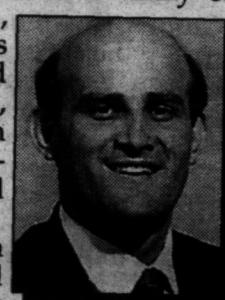
• heard a report from Charles Gaines, dean of students, on last year's enrollment. NOBTS reached another all-time high in enrollment by the end of the 1997-98 academic year, he said, with 2,551 students for the total non-duplicating head count. New Orleans Seminary's fall enrollment figures will be released at the end of December, when the six SBC seminaries customarily announce their first-semester enrollment figures together.

• approved the seminary administrators' choice of Page Southerland Page architectural firm of Texas to design a new campus master plan, to be presented to trustees at their annual spring meeting in March 1999.

The Congress of Southern Baptist Evangelists will be held at New Orleans Seminary, Feb. 1-3, 1999, featuring Stephen Olford and H. B. London as keynote speakers, while the first of a new model of FAITH evangelistic strategy training conferences will be held at New Orleans Seminary, March 8-11, 1999, led by Bobby Welch, creator of the program, along with his entire church staff of First Church, Daytona Beach, Fla. On the final day of the conference, 300 teams will go out to the greater New Orleans area and surrounding communities, hoping to lead at least 300 people to Christ and connect them with local Southern Baptist churches.



Campbell



Gibson

Clinton asks church for forgiveness

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP) — President Clinton has written a letter in which he asks for forgiveness from the fellow members of his home church.

Rex Horne, pastor of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, read the two-page letter at the conclusion of the congregation's morning worship service Oct. 18.

Clinton "expressed repentance for his actions, sadness for the consequence of his sin on his family, friends and church family, and asked for forgiveness from Immanuel," Horne said in a two-sentence, written statement released to the Arkansas Baptist news-magazine.

BP requested a copy of the letter from Horne's office. BP's church staff member said the letter was a personal, handwritten one to the pastor, who was not releasing it to others, including Immanuel members.

Horne declined a BP request for an interview about the letter's contents and is refusing other interview requests as well, the staff member said.

An audio tape was not made of the portion of the service in which the letter was read, she said.



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

world, Jesus invited us to begin a new race of people — Kingdom people, God's people, born-again people who because they belong to the Lord and carry his likeness into the world make a difference in those around them.

It is a 365-day-a-year job. Jesus is in your heart and folks around you need his love. Think about this: In Mississippi there are about 700,000 Mississippi Baptists. That is approximately one out of every three Mississippians who at some point in their life affirmed that Jesus is Lord.

What if each day each of them would make some difference, to take those steps slightly beyond the normal activities, to go slightly outside the comfortable boundaries prompted by the Lord himself and do a good work, say a good word, share a small expression, give a positive witness daily?

We could do the usual in unusual ways and make a difference in the name of Jesus.

Recently, my wife and I were eating in a restaurant and seated nearby was a sweet looking elderly couple.

Though we did not know each other, we

smiled and politely spoke to each other. As they finished their meal and were about to leave, the wife got up and came around to the husband to help him get up — simply stand up.

I watched as he was making efforts to get up out of his chair but was unable to do so. It seemed clear that they knew what they were doing but I said to Shirley, "I'm going to go and help them."

Before I could get out of my seat, right there in my peripheral vision were two men coming, just out of nowhere.

They said to the lady, "Let us help you." One on either side gently helped the man get his legs under him and stand up straight.

The two fellows went back to eat their meal. They were interrupted probably for 30 seconds, but they felt better the rest of the day — and a dear man who was unable to get up and walk went through the rest of his day lifted by the memories of some people who cared.

The wonderful thing for you and me as followers of Jesus is that we can make a difference spiritually and eternally.

People who are crippled or broken or blind or burdened and may not be able to get up and go on in life need a helping hand extended in the name of Jesus.

Today, somewhere, some way, God will place you right near one of those needy folks and he will use you to make a difference!

Don't miss the opportunity. God bless you.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Corinth Church, Magee, recently held a GA a.m., continental Recognition Service. Pictured, (front row) are Robin Kennedy; (second row) Candice Bynum, Brittany Kennedy, Holly Kennedy, Chelsey Hankins, Hillary Britt, Laura Toney; (third row) Courtney Kennedy, Kandi Spangler, Bonnie Spangler, Nicole Hankins; (back row) Whitney Swarts, Brittney Smith, and Lindsey Griffith. Leaders not pictured: Candace Mullins, Shanell Ross, Laurie Smith, Ellen Johns, and Rachelle Kennedy.

A covered dish lunch will culminate the conference on Nov. 15. For more information, contact the church at (601) 373-6677.

Senior adults of Unity Church, West, were recently honored by the young adults Sunday School class with a night of fun and surprises. A candid snapshot was taken of each senior adult before entering the church and they were then escorted into the fellowship hall to their designated places. The evening was concluded by each senior adult being presented a framed certificate of recognition. Jessie Scott is pastor.

Youth ministry of Macedonia Church, Petal, will sponsor an area-wide youth concert with Gary Wright of Trussville, Ala., Nov. 6, 11 p.m., in the Petal Civic Center. For more information contact Billy Nelson at (601) 545-3110 or 544-8808.



Damascus Church, Franklin County, honored its pastor Wilson Winstead for 50 years in the ministry on Aug. 30. Lunch was served following the services. Pictured (from left) Wilson Winstead and his wife Bobbie receiving an engraved silver tray from Bobby Ard, chairman of deacons.

Hunt to lead prayer conference

T. W. Hunt, prayer consultant and author, will lead a four-day Prayer Life Conference in Jones County at West Ellisville Church, Ellisville, Nov. 1-4. The conference will begin at 6 p.m. on Sunday. Sessions on Mon., Tues., and Wed., will begin at 7 p.m.

"The prayer conference is open to everyone with no admission charge and churches are invited to transfer their Sunday night and/or Wednesday night services to the conference sessions," said Allan Nix, director of missions, Jones County Association, which is sponsoring the event.

For seven years prior to his retirement, Hunt served as prayer consultant for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention (formerly The Sunday School Board). He continues his work with LifeWay Christian Resources as a consultant for the Discipleship and Family Division. For 24 years he taught music and missions at Southwestern Seminary. Hunt is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist College and North Texas State University.

Additional information is available by calling (601) 649-8114.

Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames, a real life dramatization, will be held at Woodville Heights Church, Jackson, 7 p.m., Nov. 1, 2, and 3. For further information, contact the church at (601) 372-5443.

A Seminar for Married and Single Adults will be held at Lakeshore Church, Jackson, Nov. 14. The times are 8-9 a.m.-breakfast; 9 a.m.-seminar; 6-noon, seminar; 6-7 p.m., finger food; and 7-9 p.m., seminar. Seminar leaders are Dot Day, Joey Rogers, and Glenn Shows.

A covered dish lunch will culminate the conference on Nov. 15. For more information, contact the church at (601) 373-6677.

A One Day Introduction to Cell Church Ministry will be held at Colonial Hills Church, Southaven, Nov. 4, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Information covered will include: Biblical Basis for Cell Groups, How Effective Cell Groups Function, How Evangelism works in the Cell Church, How to Mobilize Leadership for Growth, How Discipleship is accomplished in the Cell Structure, and Children in Cell Groups. For cost information call (601) 393-2445.

Northminster Church, Jackson, will host a Dessert Fellowship for Friends of Baptist Theological Seminary Foundation in the Jackson area, Nov. 5, 7 p.m. Schedule includes: update on plans and progress at IBTS-Prague, sharing about 11 national seminaries in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, and viewing the "Sharing the Vision" video. For more information call Shirley Reid, Northminster Church, at (601) 982-4703.

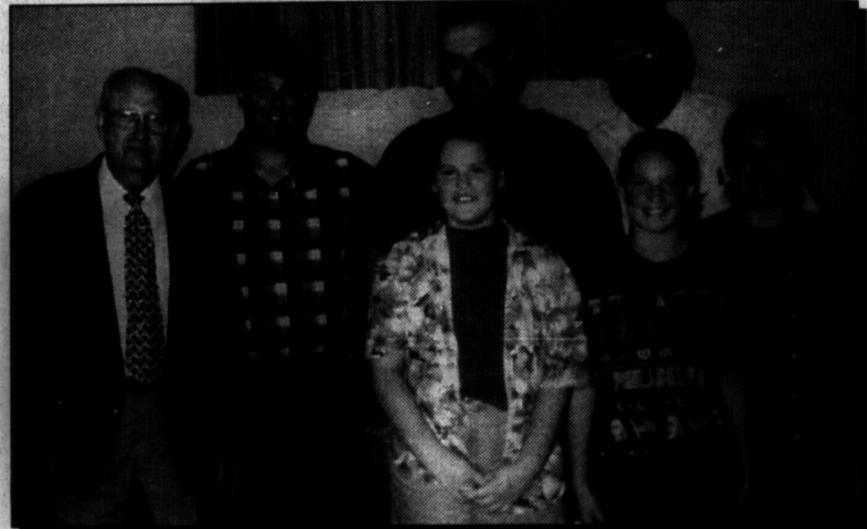
Holcomb Church, Holcomb, will have a Harvest Festival on Oct. 31 from 5-9 p.m. For more information call Randall Ashley, pastor, at (601) 226-0169.

The Imperials will be in concert at First Church, Batesville, Saturday, Nov. 7, at 7 p.m. There is no admission charge, but a free ticket will be needed to reserve your seat. Contact the church office at (601) 563-7655 to reserve your tickets. Harold Smith is minister of music.

Baptist Health Systems has recently added the Northtown Medical Clinic, 12 Northtown Drive, to its family of medical clinics throughout the Jackson metro area. The clinic is staff by Larry L. Collins, M.D., who has practiced in Northeast Jackson

for approximately 15 years. The clinic is open Mondays-Fridays from 8 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturdays from 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; and Sundays from 1-5:30 p.m. To schedule an appointment, call 957-1015.

Bethesda Church, Terry, will have a Harvest Celebration on Oct. 31, 4-8:30 p.m. The church will also have High Attendance Day on Nov. 1. Activities will include Sunday School, 9:30 a.m., and preaching, 11 a.m., by Marty Wilson, pastor. For transportation or further information, call (601) 878-5141.



Ebenezer Church, Gloster, held an Old Fashioned baptism on Sept. 27. Rather than use the baptistery in the church, five new converts were immersed in the Amite River by Alvin Hall, minister, assisted by his cousin Darwin Hall. Pictured (from left, back row) are Alvin Hall, Paul McLin, Rocky Nettles, and Darwin Hall; (front row) Lara Baker, Jordan Wooly, and Megan Baker, direct descendants of the founders and land donors of Ebenezer Church.

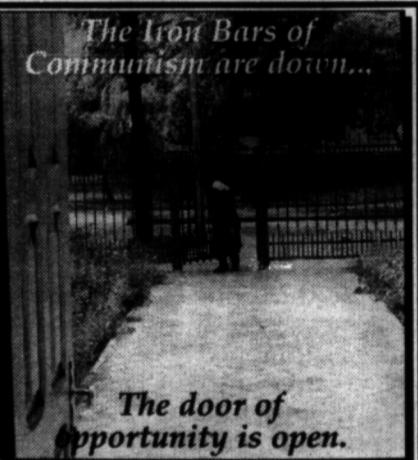
I.A.M.M., INC.

International Association
for Multiministry Missions,
Incorporated

Dr. Lannie Wilbourn
President

PROJECT DATES FOR 1999

ODESSA, UKRAINE



MARCH 4-16:
Evangelism, Pastor's Schools, Church Leadership training;
closes January 18, 1999

MAY 20-30:
Evangelism with Sports teams;
closes April 6, 1999

JUNE 17-29:
Evangelism, church plant, VBS, Medical/Dental clinics,
Veterinarian Clinics;
closes May 3, 1999

JULY 22-AUGUST 3:
Evangelism team, VBS, Medical/Dental, and/or
Veterinarian Clinics;
closes June 8, 1999

SEPTEMBER 9-21:
Evangelism, multiministry, Medical/
Dental clinics;
closes July 26, 1999

Cost: \$2150 (est.) per person includes round trip airfare Jackson-Odessa, lodging, 2 meals/day, visa, transportation, translators, and gratuities. Deposit of \$200 reserves airline seat; balance due by closing date.

L.A.M.M., Inc., PO Box 142, BRANDON, MS 39043-0142, (601) 825-5972
lwilbourn@aol.com

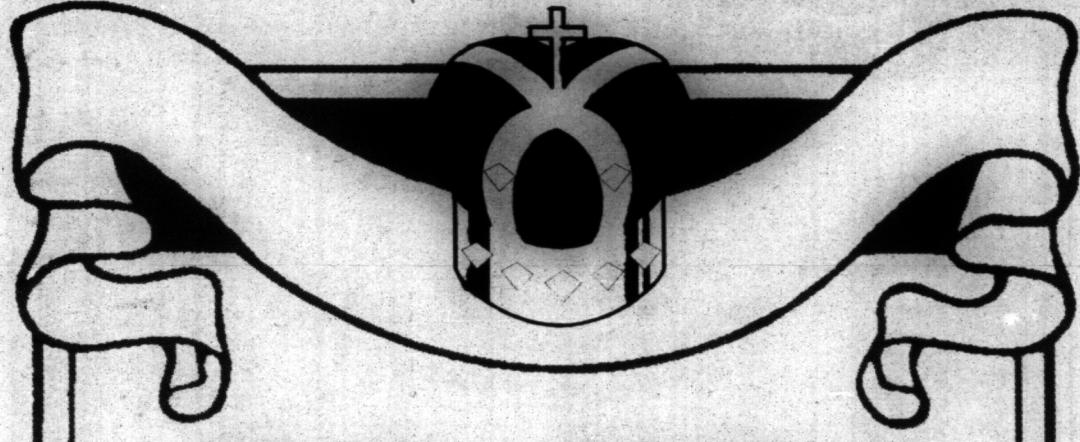
What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

October 29, 1998

HouseTops is a **Baptist Record** supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's **Office of Communication**.



"Daughters of the Crown" Queens' Court Weekend

Camp Garaywa
November 13-14

Registration Form

\$25 per person, Registration Deadline, November 6

Contact Person _____ Association _____

Church _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ Daytime Phone _____

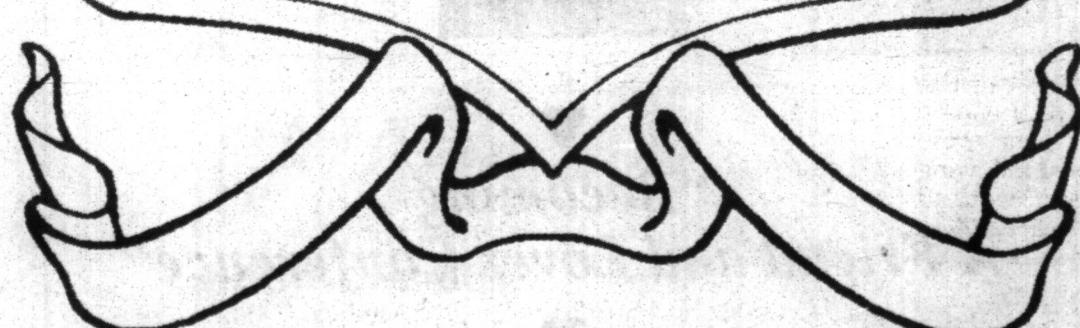
Amount Enclosed: \$25 x # (of persons) _____ = \$ _____ (total)

Make checks payable to MBCB (Mississippi Baptist Convention Board)

Send to: WMU - Queens' Court, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205

For more info: call WMU office

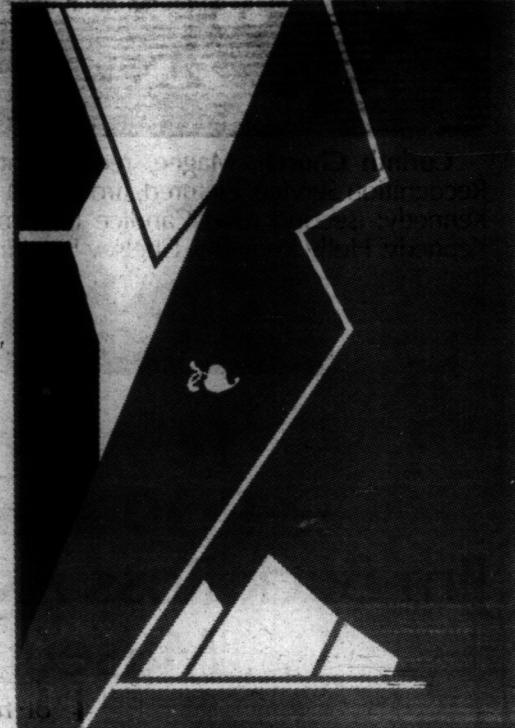
1-800-748-1651



THE SUIT PROJECT

What is it?

For over 34 years Baptists in Mississippi have enjoyed sending new suits to the pastors in new work areas. This is our way of letting the pastors in these areas of Southern Baptist life know that we care about and support them in their work.



Mississippi
Baptists say

*"Merry
Christmas"*

to pastors in the
Colorado,
Wyoming,
Montana & Iowa
Conventions

What you can do:

Men's ministries groups, individuals, churches, etc., can send their gifts payable to:

Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board
Attention:
Brotherhood Department
P.O. Box 530
Jackson, MS
39205-0530

Designate on your check: Suit Project
Sponsored by the Brotherhood Department
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Cost:
\$130 per suit



J.J. Jasper
humorous disc jockey, American
Family Radio Tupelo

'99 State Singles Retreat May 29-31, Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

Gwen Williams, Miss Chocolate from New Orleans

David Adams, Minister with Singles, Olive Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla.
Life Church Band and Praise Team, Laurel



People Reach Expo

February 27, 1999
9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Jim Buck Ross Agriculture & Forestry Museum, Jackson

Purpose

To motivate and provide churches and church leaders with practical ideas on how to reach their community.

Audience

Key Church Leadership

Schedule

9:30 a.m. General Session with Thom Ranier, director of the Billy Graham School of Evangelism and Church Growth

10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Series of 30-minute mini-conferences such as:

- How to Reach Asians
- How to Reach Hispanics
- How to Communicate an Unchanging Gospel in a Changing Time
- Creating an Evangelistic Culture
- Dealing with Community Change
- How to Start New Bible Study Groups

1:30-2:30 p.m. Closing General Session with Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Ave. Baptist Church, New Orleans

There will also be booths sponsored by churches highlighting the methods they use to reach people.

1998 Youth Ministers Conference

Featuring:
Benny Proffitt
Jerry Pounds
Bayne Pounds
Chris Davis

November 9-11, 1998

Lake Tiak O'Khata, Louisville

Registration form
Youth Ministers Conference, November 9-11, 1998
Lake Tiak O'Khata

Name _____ Position _____

Spouse's first name, if attending _____

Number and Age of Preschool Children, if attending _____

Church Name _____ Association Name _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Office Phone Number _____ Home Phone Number _____

I have made reservations at Lake Tiak O'Khata

I will not need a room, but will plan to eat the following meals:

Monday Dinner

Tuesday Breakfast

Wednesday Breakfast

Tuesday Lunch

Call Lake Tiak O'Khata (Toll free 1-888-845-6151) or write Lake Tiak O'Khata, P. O. Box 160, Louisville, MS 39339.

Complete the form and return to: Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205, no later than November 2, 1998. It is necessary that your registration be received by this date so that adequate preparation can be made.

SPONSORED BY THE
CHURCH ADMINISTRATION-PASTORAL MINISTRIES DEPT.
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board



“Becoming A Friend and Lover Conference”

With Dick Purnell
President of Single Life Resources
Saturday, March 20
Main Street Baptist Church, Hattiesburg
Call Steve Bublitz, 601-544-5444

For more info, contact
Discipleship & Family Ministry, MBCB
1-800-748-1651

Youth Evangelism Conference



MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE
CLINTON

DECEMBER 28-29, 1998



Concert **avalon**



Speaker
Ken Smith



Worship
Music
Mike
Harland



Drama
Grant &
Jennifer
Medford

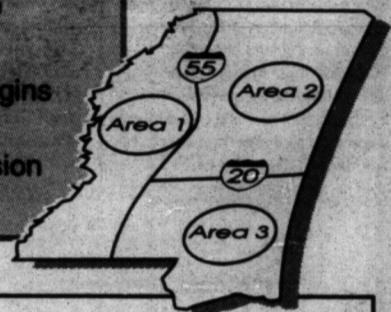
Schedule

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1998

12:00 Registration Begins
2:00 Afternoon Session
4:00 Dismiss for Dinner
7:45 CONCERT - *avalon*
9:00 Dismiss

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29

7:15 Breakfast
8:45 Conference Begins
11:00 Lunch Break
1:00 Afternoon Session
3:00 Closing



REGISTRATION FORM

Church _____ Youth Minister _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Association _____ Area of State _____

Lodging During Conference _____ (see map above)

Number Attending _____ x \$5 = \$ _____ (amount enclosed)

Make checks payable to: **Mississippi Baptist Convention Board**
Evangelism Department
P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205

Jackson Motels: (State that you are with the Youth Evangelism Conference, Mississippi Baptist Convention when making reservations)
Best Western, Metro; Comfort Inn, SW; Comfort Inn, Clinton; Days Inn, Clinton; Fairfield Inn, North; Hampton Inn, Clinton; Holiday Inn, Clinton; Holiday Inn, SW; La Quinta Inn, Motel 6 North, Ramada Inn, SW; Travelers Inn, North

GA/Acteens Campus Day - Blue Mountain College

December 5th

Cost \$7.50 per person (includes basketball game, meal, program & limited insurance)

- **Missionaries**
- **Basketball**
- **Testimonies**
- **Cheerleaders**
- **Music**

Registration Form for GA/Acteens Campus Day Blue Mountain College, December 5th

Name _____ Daytime Ph. Number _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Church Name _____ Association _____

Amount Enclosed: \$7.50 x # (of persons) _____ = \$ _____ (total)

Make checks payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Send to: WMU, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205

For more details call the WMU office at 1-800-748-1651

Pray this day for...

October 30-November 12, 1998

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

Pray With the Intent of Others Being Involved in the Harvest.

Evangelistic praying not only involves praying for the lost, but it involves praying for the laborers. Matthew records that when Jesus saw a vast crowd in need of the gospel He was moved with compassion and He commanded His disciples to "pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth workers into his harvest." (Matt. 9:38)

From: *Praying Your Friends To Christ.* p. 13.

(Voters Awareness Day (CAC Emphasis) Pray that voters will make an effort to discover the qualifications of candidates running for office and vote for the ones best qualified for each position.

1
Pray for missionaries across Western Europe as they expand their ministry strategy to include "triplet prayer groups." These are groups of three who commit to meeting together weekly for prayer. They each bring the names of three lost people with whom they are sharing the gospel and they pray for these nine people.

2
Pray for Frank Stark, a special ministries director in Strafford, Mo. Pray for the fellowship of Raceway ministries as it holds worship services for Nascar racing fans Nov. 8 in Hampton, Ga. Pray for those who will be holding the services. Pray for the annual meeting of the fellowship of the raceway ministries to be held Jan. 15-16 in Dover, Del.

3
For African-American Seminar, Victory Temple BC, Greenville, sponsored by Missions Extension & Associational Administration. For Youth Ministers Workshop, Lake Tiak O'Khata, Louisville, sponsored by Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries.

4
A non-Christian Sundanese woman said, "My heart is empty. I know who Jesus is and I want to believe, but I don't feel that God has called me yet." She is also afraid that she will be rejected by her parents if she becomes a follower of Christ. Pray that God will give her a clear call and will fill her heart with faith as she studies the Bible.

5
Recently Henry Blackaby about his burden for Christians to pray for revival. If God's people do not turn back to God, then there is no hope for our nation. Christians have drifted further and further away from God and His word. "As goes the church so goes the nation." Pray for yourself, your family and your church.

6
ISC worker Lori Price, in Zarma of Niger, has finished distributing the grain provided by Southern Baptist hunger relief funds. Pray that the Lord will continue to open doors and touch hearts through this effort in every level of the community.

7
Valery Jarrard is an employee of the NAMB. Pray for her father who has a rare eye disease. He is blind in one eye and recently he has had problems in his good eye. Please pray for healing.

8
Two missionary couples are preparing to enter Angola in November; so much depends upon the safety inside the country. The following warning recently came out of the United Nations: "Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the 4 year old peace process in Angola was seriously threatened...." Please pray!

9
For Sunday School Leadership Lab, Eagle Ridge Conf. Center, Raymond, sponsored by the Sunday School Dept. Pray that the S.S. leaders can come up with ideas to get more people attending S.S.

10
Give thanks to God that a church leader in Southeast Asia and Oceania who was put into jail for handing out Bibles was released after three weeks. He has returned to his same position in his church.

11
30

12
For the International Student Conference; Camp Garaywa, sponsored by Student Work. Three members of "Church C" are attending college in another city. Pray that they will find a church to go to in that city.

13
6

14
Missionary Jeanie Benfield of Uruguay has been in the hospital and faces several months of recuperation. Pray that God will continue to build her strength and give her and her husband, Joe, peace as they deal with her illness.

15
31

16
Pray as believers do door to door evangelism in the Sui Tai and Sui Ming buildings in Hong Kong. Pray that they will find those whom God has prepared to hear the gospel.

17
7

DECEMBER

3-76 MISS STEPHANIE COREY
7336 Anela Place, Diamondhead, MS 39520
Parents: Charles & Patricia, Field Personnel Assistance

4-86 MISS KATIE R. GRAY
R. Ruy Pinto Bandeira 1112, 29090-130 Victoria, ES, BRAZIL
Parents: Tony & Karen, Music Promotion

6-88 MISS MARISA M. WOMBLE
Casilla 1415, Asuncion, PARAGUAY
Parents: Freddie & Karen, General Evangelism

13-78 MR. T. KYLE WHITE
P O Box 864888, Tuscaloosa, AL 35486-0044
Parents: Jerry & Glenda, General Evangelism, SERVE IN KOREA

14-85 MR. ALLEN D. LIGHTSEY
VIP SAL #731, P O Box 52-5364, Miami, FL 33152-5364
Parents: Timothy & Rebecca, Church & Home Outreach
SERVE IN EL SALVADOR

20-78 MR. JOHN A. LATHAM
Baylor University, P O Box 81835, Waco, TX 76798
Parents: Tony & Kathy, Theological Education by Extension
SERVE IN PHILIPPINES

20-83 MISS MICHELLE S. SHEARER
Apartado 207, Huaraz, PERU
Parents: Kevin & Pam, General Evangelism

20-85 MISS KIMBERLY D. SHEARER
Apartado 207, Huaraz, PERU
Parents: Kevin & Pam, General Evangelism

21-76 MISS CHRISTINA S. WALLACE
USM, P O Box 4805, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-4805
Parents: Karl & Peggy, Mission Administration
SERVE IN COLOMBIA

22-77 MISS ALICIA K. PARKER
William Carey College, Box 1353, 498 Tuscan Ave., Hattiesburg, MS 39401-5499
Parents: Ronnie & Beth, Music Promotion, SERVE IN BRAZIL



Safeguarding Your Church Offerings

Your Church Offerings may be in jeopardy! A new resource is available to help.

Safeguarding Your Church Offerings is a step-by-step guide to managing your church's money from receiving, counting and depositing to spending, recording, accounting, and auditing. No church treasurer should be without a copy. Managing the church's money is of equal moral significance to developing personal stewardship. Contact Laura Marler or David Michel in the Stewardship Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention to order a free copy of this 50 page guidebook. Also, budget covers for printing your church's budget on are available at no cost. Call 1-800-748-1651 toll free or 968-3800 locally.



RHYMES ENRICHED LIFE

Editor:

Your article on Rev. Don Rhymes was beautifully written and expresses the feelings of all of us. I was blessed to have been called by him to give help when needed. He was one of the most devoted and altruistic people I have ever met. We went to members' houses so he could pray for them or their sick loved ones and he would in church at the 11 a.m. service, when he was so hurting, he should have been in bed, where most of us would have been. Our church was truly blessed by the Lord in sending him to us.

In closing, thank you Lord for the years he was with us and thank you again Lord for letting me know him and of being service in his time of need. He enriched my life forever.

Paul Tessier
Brandon

FBC TUNICA SEEK INFO

Editor:

First Baptist Church, Tunica, is seeking information regarding former pastors.

As our church prepares for our Centennial Celebration in July, 1999 we are looking for information regarding three former pastors:

H.B. Price served as pastor from May 1921-23.

C.F. Hines served as pastor from July 1930-36.

E.Y. Soileau served as pastor from September 1949-50. According to information available, Soileau came to Tunica from Warrington, Fla.

If any person has any information regarding these former pastors, or any family

member of these men please furnish this information to the History Committee of First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 785, Tunica, MS 38676. Your help will be greatly appreciated

Annette Gibson
FBC, Tunica

MUSIC MINISTER SOUGHT

Editor:

Minister of Music: Resumes are being accepted by Garden Ranch Baptist Church of Colorado Springs, Colorado, for a part-time Minister of Music. Send resume to David Hurst, Search Committee, Garden Ranch Baptist Church, 3830 Van Teylingen Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80917. Phone (719) 591-1487.

David Hurst
Colorado Springs, Colo.

WONDERFUL SAVIOR

Editor:

In the September 24 issue of The Baptist Record, the Guest Opinion writer, pastor Tommy Bufkin, stated that 3,500 people were leaving the church every day. To me, this is utterly amazing, and should break the heart of every Christian everywhere.

For years, I have watched church attendance dwindle, and, like many, I have pondered the question, why? Could it be that we are not hearing the heart of the gospel message? Rarely do we hear that the Blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin! (1 John 1:9). Rarely do we hear of his sacrificial death on the cross for you and me (Rom. 5:6). Rarely do we hear that he was raised for our justification, and we are now to seek those things which are above (Rom. 4:25, Col. 3:1).

Although the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin, it cannot change us. As a matter of fact, nothing can change us! It may surprise some, but God is not interested in changing my life. Rather, he wants to give me a brand new life!

Someone has rightfully said, "The blood takes care of what I do, and the cross takes care of what I am." The more we meditate upon this wonderful fact, the more precious he becomes to us and the purer he makes our life! This is why I think we must preach Christ.

What a wonderful Savior we have!

Bob Bardwell
Calhoun City

RELIABLE CARS NEEDED

Editor:

Transportation has always been a challenge to missionaries on home leave. Some stay a year, others for six months or even three months. To purchase a car and then have to sell it a few months later is difficult.

The Macedonian Call Foundation of Mississippi is seeking to eliminate this perennial problem. The foundation is hopeful of providing a reliable vehicle for Mississippi missionaries while they are in the States. Similar organizations are in operation in Houston, Texas, and Atlanta, Ga.

The Macedonian Call Foundation is tax exempt and a donor can deduct his contributions on his tax return. Any kind of vehicle can be donated to the Foundation regardless of its present condition. If the vehicle is not in reliable condition it can be sold and the proceeds to purchase a vehicle. Everyone can be a part of this missionary endeavor.

For more information, write or call Macedonian Call Foundation of Mississippi, P.O. Box 156, Ridgeland, MS 39158-0156. Phone: (601) 956-7770.

Thomas E. Hearon Sr.
Ridgeland

WIDE IS THE GATE

Editor:

Hebrews 3 speaks of many of the Israelites in the wilderness who were "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (v.13). Gambling is part of the deceitfulness of our day. Gambling is nothing less than tuxedoed sin.

Gambling can hardly be compared to farming. If one thinks about it, there are many insurance companies who are willing to "insure" a farmer against crop loss. How many insurance companies are seen willing to "insure" a gambler against his/her losses?

The church can hardly be compared to casinos. The day after the rapture the church will not be available to conduct business on earth. But on that day it will be business

as usual for the casino! The Lord Jesus is coming back for a spotless church, not a corrupted casino!

Gambling is a form of unfair taxation. Those who do not gamble do not contribute to this form of tax. Gambling is robbery in slow motion — Jesse James on a slow horse! Gambling is Robin Hood's alter ego! Robbing from the poor and giving to the rich. It is a tax on those who are bad at math!

We have a joke in our church that says Mississippi has 4-laned every road that leads to a gambling boat. Funny, because Jesus said in Matt. 7:13, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in that way."

Last, those who gamble put themselves in the same category as those Roman soldiers who cast lots for Jesus' clothes on that horrible crucifixion day! Enough said!

David Crowe
Meadville

LIFEWEEK A SUCCESS

Editor:

Four years ago, our prayer was to see Christian student leaders leading their peers in genuine spiritual revival. From that prayer, Lifeweek Student-Led Revival was born. The concept was simple. The students were to lead through prayer, testimony, drama, music, and preaching. The outcome was far from simple, it was amazing.

Lifeweek '98 took place Oct. 4-7. Each night was hosted by a different church. Many different South Rankin County youth were involved. Lifeweek went beyond the church youth group. It was a doorway for Christian teens to bring their non-Christian friends to an encounter with Jesus Christ.

There was an evident anointing from the Lord upon Lifeweek '98 from the very first night to the final night on Wednesday. The students had a full understanding of their purpose and mission. It was to testify of their faith in Jesus, bringing him the glory and honor. Each night the altar was filled with teens on their knees, broken before the Lord. Lives were changed by the power of the Lord. Students were bringing their non-Christian peers to the altar and sharing the gospel with them.

Our motto for Lifeweek '98 was "Just a God Thing!" We desired to see a movement of the Holy Spirit that could only be described as being an act of God. The organized services may have ended on Wednesday night, but the power of God was merely beginning. Participating churches were Briar Hill; Clear Branch; Cleary; First, Florence; Grandview; Richland United Methodist; Star; and Walker Hill.

Steve Parten
Florence



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

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SATURDAY, Nov. 14
Meridian, MS
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\$3 requested donation
at the door
for more info:
(601) 483-4591

These concerts are not ticketed. A free will offering will be received for the ministry of Dallas Holm. Those who attend are urged to bring a canned good or non-perishable food item to help feed the needy.

NAMES IN THE NEWS



William "Smitty" Smith was recently licensed to preach by First Church, Olive Branch. P.J. Scott, pastor, is pictured (from left) with Tonya and William Smith.

Clarke reunion being planned

The 1960, 1961, and 1962, classes of Clarke Memorial College (CMC), have planned a reunion Oct. 31 at Lake Tiah O'Kata in Louisville. A time of fellowship will be held in the afternoon followed by a banquet at 7 p.m. Any person who attended CMC (regardless of year) or faculty member may attend. For banquet reservations (\$17.50 per person), call Annie Laurie Fleming Thornton at (601) 856-4744, or write to 138 St. Augustine Drive, Madison, MS 39110.

Don Moore will be in charge of the program. Other committee members are David and Ina Patterson Weekly, Bobbie Shumate Haggerty, Mildred Hutchinson Rogers, and Hiram and Joan Curran Fleming.



Tommy Dickerson was ordained as deacon of Trinity Church, Pearl, on Aug. 30. Pictured (from left) are the Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

Sherry Dianne Chance recently received a Perfect Attendance Award for 19 years of perfect attendance in Sunday School at Arm Church, Arm. She is the daughter of Jackie and Patricia Chance of Arm and is currently a senior at Mississippi College. Parker Langston is director of Sunday School. Larry Chavis is pastor.

Cumberland College, Williamsburg, Ky., recently conferred upon Barry Allen, a Mississippian, the degree of Doctor of Administration. Allen was born in Kosciusko and reared in Grenada where he attended First Church. He is president and CEO of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

First Church, Anguilla, to celebrate 100 years

First Church, Anguilla, will celebrate its 100th anniversary on Nov. 7 and 8. A meal will be served on Saturday at 6 p.m. On Sunday, lunch will be served following the morning service. In the afternoon, beginning at 2 p.m. through 3:30 p.m., the church will hold an informal service covering its history. A reception will follow this service.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

The Dr. and Mrs. Howard E. Spell Lectureship will be held on Nov. 2-3 at Mississippi College. Paul Powell, former pastor of Green Acres Church, Tyler, Texas, and immediate past president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, will be the guest lecturer. He will speak to the faculty and Christian Ministry students on Nov. 2 at 7 p.m. in the B.C. Rogers Hall of Fame Room, and will speak in chapel on Nov. 3 at 10:50 a.m. A seminar for church leaders on "Taking the Lead Out of Leadership" will be held in the Hall of Fame Room from 12:30-3:30 p.m. For more information contact Harold T. Bryson at (601) 925-3297.

Mississippi College Music Department will present Walter R. Swan, baritone, in a graduate voice recital on Nov. 4 at 3 p.m., and Pamela Butler, soprano, in a senior voice recital on Nov. 3 at 8:15 p.m., both recitals will be held in Aven Auditorium. Swan is the son of the late Willie and Mattie Swan of It and serves as music director and organist



Oakdale Church, Brandon, recently licensed Jim Joiner (left) to the ministry. Gene Neal (right) is pastor. Joiner is available for pulpit supply, interim, or bivocational pastor. He can be reached through Oakdale Church at (601) 829-1360.



Jeff Westbrook (left) and **Jimmy Johnson** (right) were ordained as deacons at Becker Church, Becker, on Oct. 11. They were presented certificates by David Jay, pastor.

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PART TIME MUSIC MINISTER: Send resume to Music Minister Search Committee, Bissell Baptist Church, 4662 West Main St., Tupelo, Ms 38801.

DAY CARE DIRECTOR — The First Baptist Church of Gulfport is seeking qualified

applicants of the position of Director. A degree in Early Childhood Education and/or daycare experience is desired. Please forward resumes to: Board of Directors, FBC Daycare, PO Box 70, Gulfport, MS 39502.

BI VOCATIONAL PRESCHOOL/ CHILDREN DIRECTOR: Send resume to First Baptist Church, PO Box 110, Morton, MS 39117.

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ASSOCIATE PASTOR: Individual must possess desire/ability for assisting the church in creating new ministry models and a willingness to have responsibilities directed by developing as well as existing needs. Send resume to Associate Pastor Search Committee, Southwest Baptist Church, 6401 Scanlan St., St. Louis, MO 63139.

PIANO: 9 ft. Kawai Concert Grand Polished ebony-absolutely beautiful. Asking \$16,500. (601) 333-7429 — Steve Wilson

REVIVAL DATES

Southern Hills, Jackson: Nov. 1-5; lunch will be served following Sunday morning services; speakers are Eddie Hamilton of Jackson, Kevin Meadors of Decatur, Rodney Anderson of Hickory, Dale Round of Pulaski, and John Boggan of Forest; Steve Tadlock, Pearl, music; Ralph E. Buckley, pastor.

Bay Springs (Jasper): Nov. 1-4; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., noon and 7 p.m.; Cliff Estes, Shreveport, La., evangelist; Larry Kennedy, interim pastor, pastor.

Ruth, Ruth: Nov. 1-4; Sunday, 6 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m.; Jeff and Bekki Smith of Acworth, Ga., preaching and singing; Scott Berry, pastor.

Campers on Mission: Nov. 1-4; Hebron Church, Smithdale; Sunday, 11 a.m., dinner at the church, and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; for more information, call Howard Conner at (601) 567-2755.

Trinity, Carthage: Nov. 8-11; 7 p.m.; Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), evangelist; Graham Smith, director, Church Music Department, MBCB, music; Bill Stout, pastor.

Good Hope, Richton: Nov. 1-4; Sunday, 11 a.m., lunch, and 1:30 service; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Clay Chancellor, Stonewall, evangelist; B. J. Mills, Richton, music; David McNeil, pastor.

Hardy, Grenada: Nov. 8-11; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Michael McLendon, pastor.

First, Poplarville: Nov. 1-4; Sunday, high attendance day in Sunday School with a goal of 375; 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; speakers each service will be Bob Rogers, pastor, Sunday morning; Daryl Covington, Poplarville, Sunday evening; Bill Hardin, Picayune, Monday;

Paul Strahan, Petal, Tuesday; and Terry Ledbetter, Picayune, Wednesday.

Calvary, Braxton: Nov. 1-4; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; S. A. "Sonny" Adkins, director, Evangelism Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, guest speaker; Jeff Wedgeworth, youth minister, Calvary Church, music; Maurice Bryant, interim pastor.

Bulgarian Baptist pastor to be named new head of EBF

KIEV, Ukraine (ABP) — Bulgarian Baptist leader Theodor Angelov has been elected next general secretary of the European Baptist Federation (EBF), replacing current leader Karl Heinz Walter, who retires next fall.

Angelov was elected by the EBF council at a Sept. 23-26 meeting in Kiev, Ukraine. He will be the federation's eighth general secretary and the first from Eastern Europe.

"God has led us to this moment in history and to this person," said David Coffey, EBF president and chairman of a general-secretary search committee. Details about Angelov's starting date and where his offices will be located will be worked out with the EBF executive committee.

Angelov is currently president of the Baptist Union of Bulgaria and pastor of Sofia Baptist Church.

Angelov was born in 1939 in Lom, Bulgaria, the son of a Baptist pastor who served for more than 50 years, eight of them in prison. He professed faith in Christ at the age of 15 and was baptized a year later. He began preaching at 17.

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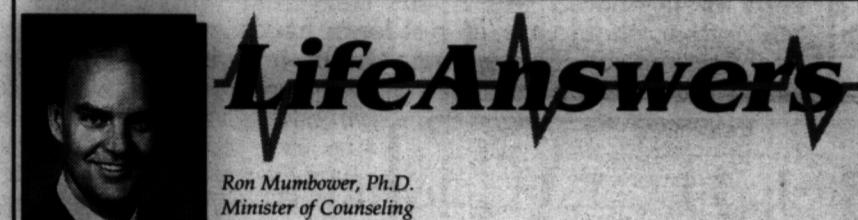
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Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

My wife of ten years divorced me due to my abusive nature. I am truly upset about this and wish I could see my two sons. How can I win them back?

It's never too late to win them back, but all wounds require time to heal. Give them the time they need to recover from their ordeal. While they are going through that process, you can show them that you have really changed — and remember, they've heard all your apologies and excuses. Consistent and genuine actions will speak louder than words. Regardless of your past conduct, your sons naturally look to you as a role model. Children are incredibly forgiving, but you must show them that you have truly changed. Support them and be there when they need you, but don't be a "Disneyland Dad," a father who buys his children everything in an attempt to win back their affection. They can see through smoke screens like that. There is no better way to show your family that you are a changed man than to live the Christian life. If you're not a Christian, ask a Christian friend or a local Baptist pastor how to become a Christian. If you already know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, elevate your relationship with him to the level it should be and get involved in your church. Locate (or begin) a men's Bible study and ask them to hold you

accountable as you and your family go through this healing process. Taking all these actions will lead to a spiritual empowerment you never knew you could achieve.

My 13-year-old daughter is dating a 17-year-old-boy, and they want to go to his grandparents for the weekend. I don't feel good about this, but I don't want to hurt my daughter. What should I do?

Go with your feelings. Something is telling you this is not a good idea, and I believe it is the Holy Spirit. Sending off two young people like that is asking for a compromising situation to develop. Frankly, a 13-year-old girl should not be dating a boy four years older. There is a power imbalance in such a relationship, as well as vast differences in desires and maturity. Your daughter is moving too fast. At her age, she should be socializing with groups of her peers rather than one individual who is so much older. Make a decision about the weekend and stick with it. Risk the hurt now, before she winds up in a life-changing situation that will be regretted by everyone involved. Your job as a Christian parent is to protect and defend your children while you bring them up in the way they should go (Pro. 22:6). That's what your feelings — and the Holy Spirit — are revealing to you right now.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.



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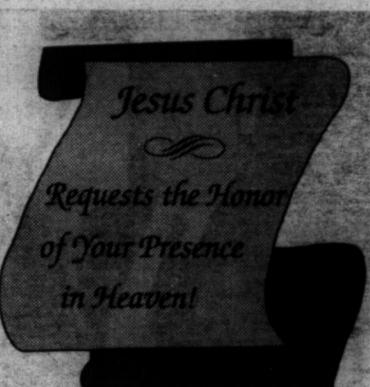
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2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (*I repent.*)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (*I believe in Jesus.*)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. (*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Staff Changes

James "Stacy" Broadwater has been called as minister of youth and music by First Church, Waveland, effective Oct. 17. Broadwater is a graduate of Mississippi Delta Junior College, University of Southern Mississippi, and Golden Gate Seminary. His wife Lelane, a student at New Orleans Seminary, will be working with him each Sunday. Talmadge Rayborn is pastor of First Church.

'All About Heaven' book reaches milestone

CARTHAGE, Miss. (Special) — On August 13 at the Carthage Healthcare Center in Carthage, Ebenezer Ministries, with the assistance of Eddie Holmes, pastor of the Madden Church, Madden, served nursing home resident number 10,000 with a personal visit and a copy of the book "All About Heaven" by Carless Evans and Paula Moore.

This nursing home ministry was started in May 1996 at the invitation of Kay Harrell, assistant administrator of the Sumter County Nursing Home of York, Ala.

At that time, the home's 116 residents received a personal visit and were given a copy of the book, "All About Heaven." Since then, thousands of residents have been served by giving them hope for

tomorrow, which is strength for today.

The need is so great that retired pastors are being secured to aid in this ministry. At the present time, northwest Mississippi and the city of Memphis are being served by Millard Swinney of Olive Branch (601-895-6713).

David Norris of Tupelo (601-681-3174) is serving the city of Tupelo and all of Northeast Mississippi.

Leon Adams of Hartselle, Ala. (205-773-3621) is serving Huntsville, Decatur, and Hartselle, Ala.

Very slowly, other retired ministers will be secured to serve cities throughout the southeastern portion of the U.S.

The results have been outstanding. A woman in Jackson was in the room when a book was presented to her husband, who was incapacitated. She read the book to him and she requested five additional copies.

In Vicksburg, a woman was in the room when her mother-in-law was given a copy of "All About Heaven." She saw the book and requested a copy for herself, saying, "Two months ago, my husband died. I've been having a terrible time. I need to know something about Heaven and eternity."

From another nursing home came a letter from a man who said, "My 94-year-old mother is about

to graduate from this life. Your ministry has been such a blessing for us. Can we have additional copies of the little book 'All About Heaven'?"

One nursing home resident said, "I've been sitting here praying because I know that I'm not going to be here much longer. I wanted somebody to come and tell me about heaven."

"Thank God, that I not only have someone to tell me, but I have a book to read about heaven."

Another nursing home resident said, "I've been reading about heaven, and, you know, when I get there I won't be sick anymore."

Ebenezer Ministries was founded in 1994 by Carless Evans and Paula Moore of Meridian. Since then, they have published two books, "All About Heaven" and "The Joy of Christian Living."

A third book is now under production entitled, "The Great Story," which deals with God's eternal purpose — redemption, the plan of the ages (Ephesians 3:11).

It is designed to aid Sunday School teachers in having a better grasp of the central theme of the Bible.

Further information about this ministry can be obtained by calling (601) 737-2240 or by fax at (601) 483-0406 or by e-mail at EbenMin@aol.com. The mailing address is: Ebenezer Ministries, P.O. Box 45, Bailey, MS 39320.

Full coverage of the
1998 Mississippi Baptist Convention
coming up in the Nov. 5 issue of

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LIFE AND WORK

Identifying the job

Nehemiah 1:1-6a, 11; 2:1-8

By Michael Johnson

Before we can begin to understand the message of the book of Nehemiah, it is critical that we first place it in its proper historical setting.

After the reign of Solomon the nation of Israel was divided into two countries; Israel in the north and Judah in the south (1 Kings 12). For some 210 years the nations of Israel and Judah existed side by side until the Assyrians vanquished Israel in 721 B.C., and the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple and carried its inhabitants into exile around 586 B.C. The Old Testament prophets were very clear in explaining that these destructions were God's judgment on the people for their continued unfaithfulness.

ness and idolatry.

The story of Nehemiah takes place after the Babylonian empire had fallen to the Persians under King Cyrus in 539 B.C. Cyrus was a very tolerant king and allowed all the people who had been living in exile under the Babylonians to return to their countries with the right to rebuild the sanctuaries of their Gods. Of course, this included the people who had now become known as the Jews. The story of Nehemiah probably takes place almost a century later, during the reign of Persian King Artaxerxes I (464-423 B.C.).

Who was Nehemiah?
Nehemiah is a Jew, but had never been to his homeland. Ezra indicates that after Cyrus' edict, not



Johnson

all Jews wanted to return to Jerusalem, having established good livelihoods during the exile. In Nehemiah 1:11 we learn that Nehemiah's occupation is that of serving as the king's cupbearer. In the culture of that day, the cupbearer, with direct access to the king, was regarded as an important and influential position.

While in court one day, Nehemiah had the opportunity to hear a report from Jews who had returned from Jerusalem. While the exact historical situation is not known, it is clear from Nehemiah 1:1-4 that the news was not good. Basically Jerusalem, while resettled and the Temple rebuilt, was defenseless without walls. A city without walls was a city without a future; defenseless against any enemy. If Ezra 4:7-23 and 7:21-26 serve as a background to this report, then not only was Jerusalem ringed by hostile neighbors, Jerusalem was on its own!

What does Nehemiah do?
This was distressing news to Nehemiah who wept, prayed and fasted (1:1-11a). Clearly Nehemiah was a devoted Jew who was not only dedicated to the religion of his ancestors; but his faith was alive and vibrant. In his prayer, after praising God and asking for forgiveness of sins, Nehemiah then asks that God might use him and his position with the king to assist his fellow Jews in Jerusalem.

In Nehemiah 2:1-3 we see that because of Nehemiah's sad demeanor, the king is prompted to question his cupbearer. The text indicates Nehemiah was afraid. Perhaps Nehemiah's sadness angered the king or maybe Nehemiah was unsure of how the king might respond to his request. It should be remembered that the king held the absolute power of life and death over his subjects. Nehemiah, however, prayed and then boldly asked to be authorized to rebuild the city of his forefathers (2:4-8). Nehemiah had thought

this out — he wanted letters of safe passage to the surrounding provinces and for appropriate supplies that would be needed. Nehemiah viewed the king's favorable response to his request as evidence of God's work.

What does this mean for me?

For Christians, the call to salvation is a call to ministry. The nature of that ministry is left for the individual to discover, but can be found through prayer, Bible study, and an examination of needs in the church and community. While we 'cannot do it all' we can recognize that God has uniquely gifted us for a specific ministry (see Ephesians 4). Once our concerns and gifts have been matched, we can like Nehemiah, be bold in seeking all that needs to be acquired in order to accomplish that ministry. What concerns have captivated your heart? Are you praying about it? What is God leading you to do?

Johnson is a professor in the Christian Studies and Philosophy Department at Mississippi College.

more important matters.

God's leaders need to listen to Jethro's advice today. The responsibility of leadership is more than one person can handle. The early church appointed men called deacons to take care of the needs of the poor and widows so the work of praying and preaching would not be diminished. Today, many churches have committees to handle the routine matters of the church. There are teachers in Bible Study, Discipleship Training, and Mission organizations to share the load of teaching. When everyone discovers and uses their spiritual gifts in the work of the church, God's leader will not wear out, but will be more effective in teaching and equipping others for kingdom work. Pastors and church members need to partner together for ministry and share the load of leadership.

Blackman is pastor of First Church, Marion.

Southern Kingdom of Judah and ordered him not to preach again in Bethel. Jeroboam and Amaziah responded defensively when confronted with the truth. He would rather eliminate the bearer of bad news than heed the message of warning.

Firm strength (7:14-15). Amos responded to Amaziah: "I am not a professional prophet. I'm a simple herdsman and farmer." In those days many people traveled the country side claiming to be prophets. More often than not they were charlatans and hucksters. Amos distanced himself from them. In verse 15, he told Amaziah that his calling as a prophet wasn't based upon personal initiative. God took him and commissioned him as a prophet. That confidence has kept millions of prophets in the ministry through tough times of disappointment and frustration.

Bowers is pastor of First Church, Indianola.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Working with God's leaders

Exodus 17:8-13; 18:17-22

By Walter M. Blackman

The modern pastor is expected to be a captivating preacher, a professional counselor, a financial guru, a building expert, a chief administrator, and have a number of other abilities as well.

The path of leadership is often lonely and without help. No wonder a recent letter from Dr. James Dobson speaks of 80% of pastors and 84% of their wives are discouraged in their work. What is badly needed in our churches are people willing to work with God's leaders to accomplish the task of winning the world to Christ.

Upholding God's leaders
(17:8-13) Israel's first encounter

with an enemy was the Amalekites. They were a nomadic tribe living in the wilderness. Amalek was a grandson of Esau. Despite their common ancestry, the Amalekites attacked the Israelites. Moses chose Joshua to pick men for battle and fight the Amalekites. Joshua obeyed Moses and led the Israelites into battle. Moses stood up on top of a hill and raised the rod of God for all the Israelite army to see. As long as Moses' arms were raised, the Israelites were victorious. When Moses' arms fell down, the Amalekites prevailed. Eventually, Moses' arms became too heavy to keep up. His brother Aaron and Hur



Blackman

propelled Moses' arms up and the Israelites won a great victory.

Moses was a spiritual cheerleader, giving guidance and direction to the battle, but it required soldiers and helpers to accomplish the victory. Churches are very similar. Pastors are to be teachers, preachers, and equipers of God's people, but it takes men and women willing to be fruit-bearing disciples to win spiritual victories. When churches pray for their pastors, lifting them up to the Lord, helping them with the work, keeping the pastor free to pray, study, and proclaim the Word of God, then spiritual enemies can be put to flight. Moses was unable to do it alone. He needed the help of others. God's leaders cannot do it alone, they need the help of every church member, getting involved in the Lord's work of winning people to Christ. Is

your pastor raising his arms alone, or are you helping him by holding him up in prayer and serving on the battlefield?

Sharing the load (18:17-22)

The people of God came to Moses for answers to questions and to solve various difficulties. Moses listened to them from the morning until the evening. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, saw the situation and told Moses it was not good for him to carry the load of leadership by himself. Jethro told Moses he would wear himself out. Jethro gave Moses a plan of organization to give more responsibility to others. The lesser problems could be handled by leaders of smaller groups among God's people. Moses could handle the more important problems. Such organization is the basis of our judicial system today with lesser courts handling the smaller cases and the larger courts and supreme courts handling the

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Bringing correction

Amos 6:1; 7:7-15

By Greg Bowers

In 1980, smoke began to billow from the top of Mount St. Helens in Washington. She was about to erupt and a massive evacuation effort was launched. Thousands of people living within a 20-mile radius were forcibly evacuated. One crusty old miner named Harry Truman refused to listen to the warnings. Friends and family members tried to reason with him, but he was adamant in his refusal to leave. Mount St. Helens blew her top and Harry Truman was buried under 700 feet of hardened lava. There can be disastrous consequences when we refuse to heed



Bowers

reasonable warnings.

False security (6:1).

This is a picture of the affluent society of Amos' day and God's judgment against it. Jerusalem, the capitol of the Southern Kingdom, considered herself indestructible because of her location at the top of a hill and because of her half-hearted relationship with God. Samaria, the capitol of the Northern Kingdom, thought herself indestructible because she was populated with the most noble men in the most notable nation in the region. Her attitude was: "The entire region looks to these men for guidance. That should be enough to secure

our position on the world stage." Both of these proud cities would eventually fall. Samaria fell to the Assyrians in 721 B.C. while Jerusalem (Zion) fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

Failed standards (7:7-9).

I knew a girl in my high school who constantly claimed that God had spoken to her in visions. We questioned her sanity. The people of the Northern Kingdom probably reacted to Amos in the same way. These verses are the third of five visions recorded in the book. In this one, Amos saw God standing by a wall with a plumbline, a carpenter's measuring device. God was measuring the commitment of his people. Obviously, they did not measure up and God declared his judgment. Verse nine indicates the scope of God's judgment: their places of worship would become

desolate and their king would be destroyed by the sword. Kings were obligated to represent and rule for God and bring forth righteousness and justice. Jeroboam II was disobedient in all of those areas. (It is worth noting here that visions one and two indicate that God's judgment was averted by Amos' fervent appeals. In this vision and two others that follow, Amos doesn't even bother to plead for God's mercy because he knew that judgment was inevitable.)

Foolish smugness (7:10-13).

Amaziah was a priest at Bethel (which means "the house of God"). He was appointed by King Jeroboam and I suspect that he was a yes-man for the king. He approached the king and subtly twisted Amos' words to make them sound like veiled threats against the king. Whether on the king's orders or based upon an inflated sense of self-importance, Amaziah banished Amos into the

'Christian country' music gains momentum

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — He once traveled the world, earning a seminary degree, working as a newspaper reporter and serving as a missionary to Bangladesh.

But Daniel Johnson recognizes his biggest challenge lies ahead of him. He hopes to help jump start Christian country music, an industry trying to regroup after various setbacks.



"The music's not dead," said Johnson, a promoter, songwriter, and performer based in Nashville, Tenn. "It doesn't matter what (record companies) do, the music is still getting out there and people are hearing it."

Johnson's reference concerns restructurings and cutbacks at a number of Nashville record labels that once promoted Christian or positive country artists. In addition, earlier this year the influential Contemporary Christian Music magazine eliminated its Christian country song chart.

But Johnson and other performers haven't given up hope. In early September, they staged a "Number One" party on Music Row to honor seven Christian artists with chart-topping hits. The next day, 45 participants gathered for a symposium on the challenges facing their specialized music field.

Johnson said they discussed what the music should be called ("Christian country" or "country gospel"), the need for a universally recognized chart, for resources and for seeking God's direction. The group agreed to meet again in December.

"I was trying to bring factions together and talk about some of the issues that have divided us," Johnson said. "There were some people who said nothing was accomplished. But any time you get 45 people together from all over the country ... I think God did a miracle. Who knows what's going to happen out of this?"

Whatever takes place, Southern Baptists will play a key role, said Johnson, a member of Crievewood Church in Nashville.

Among Southern Baptists who spoke at the meeting:

• Larry Dunlap, a songwriter and pastor of Grace Church, Pleasant View, Tenn., who led the devotional. He drew his message on breaking down walls from Joshua 6.

"The walls are things that keep Christian country from being all we can be," said Dunlap, who co-wrote the #1 tune, "He Is There."

"It's an instrument of ministry."

Whether we have a chart or not, or gold records, doesn't matter. It's a tool to reach people who won't listen to Southern gospel [music] or go to church."

• Fred Bacher of Dothan, Ala., a radio station ad salesman who hosts "Sunday Country," a five-hour inspirational radio show and, now, a television version. He spoke about how stations can profit from a Christian country format, noting that "Sunday Country" topped its region's Arbitron radio ratings for every age group in its time slot last year.

"Most Christian radio is for Christians," said Bacher, a member of Dothan's Ridgecrest Baptist Church. "I want to do something for people who like country music but are unchurched. That's why I interject positive country in the program." Bacher spent 15 years as a pastor and five more as an evangelist before sensing that God was directing him into a new career.

Despite the problems Christian country has experienced lately, Bacher said he believes it has the same kind of promise as contemporary Christian music in the 1970s.

"We've got to get a [nationally] syndicated Christian country program," he said. "Distribution is another need. There's got to be one place where you can order this stuff."

• Tony Rollo, a former minister of music and youth outreach and owner of a computer networking firm, who reviewed how radio-Internet links can spread this format.

Christian country can be compared to a battlefield," said Rollo, who attends Lakeview Church in Tallahassee, Fla. A lot of participants are staggering and lack direction, he commented.

"Basically, you have people who saw a lot of dollar signs," he said of the boom-and-bust cycle. "Things take time to develop. Unfortunately, American business is extreme-

ly shortsighted. If people throw money at something and it doesn't show a profit in six months, they're out of it."

Rollo is establishing a new Christian Country Network (CCN) site on the Internet at "www.christiancountry.com" or "www.radiojc.net/ccn."

While much of the site remains under construction, Rollo plans to include a variety of audio and video segments, programming, stories and pictures about Christian country. One feature will be broadcasts of "Gospel Country," a syndicated show hosted by Les Roberts currently airing on 25 country radio stations nationwide. Roberts publishes a twice-a-month newsletter, the Christian Country Research Bulletin, and also has an Internet site dedicated to country gospel, at www.bigfoot.com/~christiancountry.

"We will have discussion areas where people can express their feelings about a song," Rollo said of his CCN initiative. "We want to facilitate freedom, where people can express their feelings...."

"I think God is doing something special here," he said. "He's giving people experience in the music business, to let them know how to get things recorded and to market. When they're no longer recording or touring, they will be able to concentrate on helping others."

Former drug dealer now fights Satan

KINGSTON, Jamaica (BP) — In a few hours, Buddy Roban's future changed from college student to prison inmate.

Then, just as quickly, God changed Roban's future again — and his eternal destiny as well. Now he serves God with more enthusiasm than he ever served the devil.

It was 1977. Roban was visiting cousins in West Palm Beach, Fla. They asked if he wanted to help them unload a plane smuggling marijuana from Jamaica to Florida that night. It would be easy money, they promised.

Roban agreed, but someone saw the plane land and alerted the law. Roban and four others were arrested. Since their car also had guns in it and, it was said, cocaine, the five faced possible life sentences.

Fortunately, another of Roban's cousins was active in Gold Coast Baptist Church. She told her pastor of his plight. The pastor visited the prisoners and also intervened with the judge in the case.

Roban was convicted and sentenced to 15 years in prison. But he was allowed to remain

free while his case was appealed. Two years later, his sentence was the only one of five overturned.

"I deserved to go to prison as much as I deserved to go to hell. That's how guilty I was," Roban says.

After he was saved, God gave Roban an intense desire to share the gospel with other people. He gives people tracts and puts them on cars. He shares his witness in prisons.

Roban also sells cold drinks at University of Florida football games to raise money for mission trips to Jamaica each year.

This summer, as in four previous summers, he traveled to Jamaica with a group of volunteers from Florida to do construction work and hold Vacation Bible Schools on the island.

"I praise God I'm here in Jamaica because I know in times gone by members of my family did damage to the people here (by trafficking drugs). We can go back and fight Satan instead of serving him as we did once," Roban said.



PART OF THE SOLUTION — Patrick "Buddy" Roban, a converted drug trafficker, helps lead a Vacation Bible School in Jamaica for the fifth year. Here a child locates Belize on a plastic globe to help Roban tell a missionary story. (BP photo by Betty Poor)

Bibliocipher

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FTNW WXH VAQORZ
AIKZ WXR SKQO, TZO XR
NXTSS NANWTDZ WXRR:
XR NXTSS ZRCRQ NAJIRQ
WXR QDBXWRKAN WK
VR PKCRO.

INTSP JDJWH-JDCR:
WGRZWH-WGK

Clue: K=O

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Six Forty-Four.